

## REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-16 remain pending, wherein claims 17-34 were previously withdrawn. By this communication, claims 1 and 12 are amended, and no claims are canceled or added.

### **Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

#### **Claims 1-11 and 13-16 - Howard/Van der Meulen**

Claims 1-11 and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Howard* (U.S. Patent No. 6,728,804) in view of *Van der Meulen* (U.S. Patent No. 6,906,617). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In regard to independent claim 1, the Office acknowledges that *Howard* does not disclose the power supply managing means feature. However, the Office asserts that *Van der Meulen* discloses this feature and further asserts that the combination would be obvious (*See* Office Action, pg. 4). Applicants submit that *Van der Meulen* does not disclose a "power supply managing means that manages a state of power supply of the communication adapter apparatus, and controls an operation of at least one of the communication control means and the apparatus interface means in accordance with a state of the power supply" as recited in claim 1.

Referring to Figure 2 of the instant application, the power supply managing means 9 manages the state of the power supply in the communication adapter apparatus 3, and applies predetermined limitations to the communication control means 6 and the network interface means 7 according to the management state of the power supply. For example, when the power supply managing means 9 has

detected only a residual amount of power in the communication adapter apparatus 3, the power supply managing means 9 instructs the network interface 7 to shift to a mode for controlling power consumption of the network interface means itself (e.g., standby mode). The power supply managing means 9 also instructs the communication control means 6 to control communication frequency and notifies the communication control means 6 that the network interface means 7 has changed to standby mode. The power supply managing means 9 further gives information (e.g., the residual amount of power) to the apparatus communicating managing means 5 according to a predetermined procedure. When another apparatus connects to the network, an operation command is transmitted to the apparatus 1. The network interface means 7 detects the operation command on the network and returns from standby mode to the normal operation mode. See Specification, pgs. 27-29.

*Van der Meulen* discloses a home automation system including a variety of appliances and ancillary devices that facilitate the communication and processing of information and commands related to the appliances. The instantaneous power consumption of an appliance included in the home automation system is monitored to determine the status of the appliance. The determined status may be used by the home-automation system to "effect a variety of actions, including notifying the user, terminating the available power to the appliance, initiating an action by another appliance, and so on" (See *Van der Meulen*, col. 2, lines 31-35).

As discussed above, the system of *Van der Meulen* monitors and/or manages the status of the power supply **of an appliance** included in the system, and based on this power supply status, the system initiates certain actions (e.g., terminating power to the appliance, etc.). However, in the system of the instant application, the

power supply status of the communication adapter apparatus itself is monitored, and based on the power supply status of the communication adapter apparatus, the communication adapter apparatus performs certain actions (e.g., limiting access to the communication adapter apparatus by devices such as appliances, etc.).

Because *Van der Meulen* merely discloses monitoring and/or managing the status of the power supply **of an appliance** included in a home automation system, it cannot be fairly concluded that *Van der Meulen* discloses a "power supply managing means that manages a state of power supply **of the communication adapter apparatus**" as recited in independent claim 1.

In regard to independent claims 13-16, *Howard* discloses that the communications adapter may have a translator module that may be programmed to send commands to the device, to access data on the device, to receive commands from the device, to control the device, and to translate message protocols to/from the device (*See Howard*, col. 5, lines 14-28). Thus, *Howard* discloses the use of routines and/or instructions for handling communications over the network to and from the communications adapter. However, in the system of the instant application, when a home appliance, for example, is connected to its respective input/output interface, and a power supply voltage signal is detected from the terminal of the input/output interface, the CPU of the communications adapter apparatus detects the serial input/output format of the connected home appliance and selects the driver software that controls the hardware of the interface of the serial input/output format that is stored in the storage in accordance with the detected result. (*See Specification*, pp. 56-57).

Thus, as discussed above, *Howard* discloses the use of routines or instructions for communicating to and from the communications adapter (e.g., the adapter sends commands and receives commands), whereas, the instant application discloses the use of a voltage signal for selecting particular driver software from a plurality of drivers to communicate to and from the communication adapter. As such, the controlling of the appliance hardware, for example, is not based upon a command sent from or received by the communication adapter, but rather, is based upon the driver software stored in the communication adapter itself. A particular driver software is selected based upon the voltage signal received from a specific input/output interface of a particular appliance. Accordingly, it cannot be fairly concluded that *Howard* discloses "***on the basis of a response returned from the home appliance..., selecting driver software of the serial input/output system***" as recited in independent claim 13, and as similarly recited in independent claims 14-16. Further, the Office does not purport that *Van der Meulen* discloses this aforementioned deficiency of *Howard*.

Therefore, *Howard* or *Van der Meulen*, alone or in combination, can not render independent claims 1 and 13-16 obvious to one skilled in the art. Claims 2-11 are patentable by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1, and for the features recited therein. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-11 and 13-16 be withdrawn.

**Claim 12 - Howard/Fritsche**

Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Howard* in view of *Fritsche et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,567,007, hereinafter *Fritsche*). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants have amended independent claim 12 to include the feature of "the CPU distinguish[ing] an input/output system for the home appliance on the basis of voltage information supplied from the home appliance via a specific terminal of the input/output interface and selects driver software corresponding to the input/output system based on the supplied voltage information." Applicants incorporate the above discussion regarding independent claims 13-16, and submit that *Howard* does not disclose "select[ing] driver software corresponding to the input/output system ***based on the supplied voltage information***" for the same reasons previously discussed. Further, *Fritsche* does not disclose this afore-mentioned deficiency of *Howard*. *Fritsche* merely discloses identifying an electrical device based upon a voltage measurement.

Accordingly, *Howard* or *Fritsche*, alone or in combination, cannot render independent claim 12 obvious to one skilled in the art. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 12 be withdrawn.

**Conclusion**

Based on at least the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-16 are allowable, and that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request a favorable examination and consideration of the instant application. In the event the instant application can be placed in even better form, Applicants request that the undersigned attorney be contacted at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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